

# **1. Introduction**

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## **1.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT**

This Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR), which has been prepared in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), provides responses to comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (2017 Draft EIR) and the Revised Draft EIR for the adoption and implementation of the proposed Southeast Greenway General Plan Amendment and Rezoning project, herein referred to as “proposed project.” The 2017 Draft EIR and Revised Draft EIR identify significant impacts associated with the proposed project, identifies and considers alternatives to the proposed project, and identifies mitigation measures to avoid or reduce potential environmental impacts. This Final EIR also contains text revisions to the 2017 Draft EIR and the Revised Draft EIR, where warranted. This Final EIR, together with the 2017 Draft EIR and the Revised Draft EIR, constitutes the complete EIR for the proposed project.

## **1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS**

According to CEQA, lead agencies are required to consult with public agencies having jurisdiction over a proposed project, and to provide the general public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR. This Final EIR has been prepared to respond to comments received on the 2017 Draft EIR and the Revised Draft EIR.

### **1.2.1 2017 DRAFT EIR**

Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15085, a Notice of Completion (NOC) of the 2017 Draft EIR was filed with the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) State Clearinghouse and circulated to State agencies on Monday, August 21, 2017 for a 45-day review period ending on Wednesday, October 4, 2017. Pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15087, the City provided at the same time a Notice of Availability (NOA) and the 2017 Draft EIR was distributed to various local and regional agencies, and the general public and private organizations for the 45-day public review period. During the 45-day review period, a public meeting was held during the Planning Commission meeting held on Thursday, September 14, 2017 in the City Council Chambers to provide an overview of and to invite public comments on the 2017 Draft EIR.

Copies of the 2017 Draft EIR were made available for review to interested parties at the Santa Rosa City Hall (100 Santa Rosa Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95404), in the Planning and Economic Development Department (Room 3) and the City Manager’s Office (Room 10) and the Sonoma County Library (211 E Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95404), as well as the “Plan the Southeast Greenway” website at <http://planthegreenway.com/>.

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### 1.2.2 REVISED DRAFT EIR

After preparation of the 2017 Draft EIR, but prior to its certification, the City prepared additional transportation analysis and subsequent noise impact analysis to reflect the changes in traffic flow as a result of the additional traffic impact analysis. In compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15088.5(f), the 2017 Draft EIR was revised to include the new transportation and noise analysis (i.e., Revised Draft EIR). As with the 2017 Draft EIR, an NOC for the Revised Draft EIR was filed with the OPR State Clearinghouse and circulated to State agencies on Monday, January 28, 2019 for a 45-day review period ending on Wednesday, March 13, 2019. Concurrent with the NOC, the City circulated and NOA for the Revised Draft EIR to various local and regional agencies, and the general public and private organizations for the 45-day public review period. During the 45-day review period, a public meeting was held during the Planning Commission meeting held on Thursday, February 14, 2019 in the City Council Chambers to provide an overview of and to invite public comments on the Revised Draft EIR. The purpose of the recirculation was to allow interested public agencies, groups, and individuals the opportunity to review and comment on the adequacy of the updated information provided in the Revised Draft EIR and to submit testimony on the possible environmental effects of the proposed project.

### 1.2.3 COMMENTS RECEIVED

Written comments received on the 2017 Draft EIR and the Revised Draft EIR are included in their original format as Appendix A, Comment Letters, and in Chapter 5, Comments and Responses, of this Final EIR. Verbal comments were given at two public hearings on September 14, 2017 and February 14, 2019, which were recorded by the City as part of the administrative record. Verbal comments are summarized<sup>1</sup> in Chapter 5, Comments and Responses, of this document, and responses to comments on environmental issues are provided.

### 1.2.4 EIR CERTIFICATION

This Final EIR will be presented at a Planning Commission hearing at which the Commissioners will advise the City Council on certification of the EIR and approval of the proposed project. However, the Planning Commission will not take final action on the EIR or the proposed project. Instead, the City Council will consider the Planning Commission's recommendations on the Final EIR and the proposed project during a noticed public hearing and will make the final action regarding certification of the Final EIR. All responses to comments submitted on the 2017 Draft EIR and Revised Draft EIR by agencies will be provided to those agencies at least 10 days prior to certification of the EIR. The City Council will make findings regarding the extent and nature of the impacts as presented in the EIR. The EIR will need to be certified as having been prepared in compliance with CEQA by the City Council prior to making a decision to approve or deny the proposed project. Public input is encouraged at all public hearings before the City Council or Planning Commission. The City Council is currently scheduled to consider certification of the Final EIR at a public hearing in summer 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> Verbal comments included in Chapter 5, Comments and Responses, of this Final EIR, are not verbatim, but are summarized based on recordings posted on the City of Santa Rosa website. To listen to the recording, please refer to the City of Santa Rosa's Legislative Portal for the recording of the Planning Commission dates listed above.